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(54) **CONTENT ADDRESSABLE MEMORY WITH PROGRAMMABLE WORD WIDTH AND PROGRAMMABLE PRIORITY**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A content addressable memory (CAM) device including a CAM array and a priority index table. The CAM array has a plurality of rows of CAM cells, each row including a plurality of row segments and being adapted to store a data word that spans a selectable number of the row segments. The priority index table is coupled to the plurality of rows of CAM cells and is adapted to store a plurality of priority numbers, each priority number being indicative of a priority of a corresponding data word stored in the CAM array.